

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
SECSTATE WASHDC 6534

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E.O. 11652 : N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SG, GV

SUBJECT: SOCCER AND POLITICS

REF CONAKRY 1796 AND PREVIOUS

1. SENEGALESE GOVERNMENT HAS LONG BEEN OBJECT OF SOME OF GUINEAN PRESIDENT SEKOU TOURE'S MORE VIRULENT VERBAL ATTACKS, AND SHRILLNESS OF THAT CRITICISM AS REPORTED BY EMBASSY CONAKRY AND HEARD HERE ON GUINEAN RADIO HAS INTENSIFIED DURING RECENT WEEKS' ARRESTS AND "PLOT REVELATIONS." ALTHOUGH GOS OFFICIALS HAVE REFRAINED FROM ANSWERING IN KIND, SENEGALESE MEDIA HAVE RESPONDED WITH SHARPER AND MORE ELABORATE DEROGATORY COMMENT THAN UNUSUAL ON PRESIDENT TOURE AND GINEAN POLITICAL EVENTS.

2. IN THIS ATMOSPHERE UNUSUAL ATTENTION LOCALLY HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON FACT THAT AFRICA CUP QUARTER FINALS SOCCER MATCH SHOULD BE PLAYED BETWEEN GUINEAN TEAM HAFIA AND SENEGALESE TEAM DIARAF. GOG WAITED UNTIL SEPT 9 TO INFORM GOS THAT HAIFIA WOULD COME TO DAKAR FOR SEPT 12 GAME REQUIRED BY RULES; IF GUINEANS HAD WAITED ONE MORE DAY TO ACCEPT INVITATION SENEGAL WOULD HAVE WON BY FORFEIT. (FONMINISTRY OFFICIAL HERE IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE ON SEPT 8 DESCRIBED GOS IMPATIENCE WITH INCONVENIENCE BEING CAUSED BY GUINEANS' DELAY

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IN ANNOUNCING THEIR INTENTIONS.)

3. BEFORE SELL-OUT CROWD OF 40,000 SPECTATORS, HAFIA AND DIARAF PLAYED LIVELY, SPORTSMANLIKE, AMICABLE GAME IN DAKAR SEPT 12. MATCH ENDED IN 2 TO 2 TIE. WE UNDER-STAND RETURN MATCH WILL NOW BE PLAYED IN CONAKRY OF KORITE (END OF RAMADAN) SEPT 26. UNUSUAL PRESENCE OF HAIFIA'S AIR GUINE PLANE AT DAKAR AIRPORT APPARENTLY WILL NOW BE RECIPROCATED BY SOME SENGALESE SOCCER DIPLOMACY IN CONAKRY.

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